

Family Readiness begins with you

Hello folks, I am Col. Terry Fobbs, commander of Area Support Group Falcon. I am the Post Commander for Camp Bondsteel and responsible for Camp Monteith. When it comes to life support, logistics and installation security, those are the things I take care of.

Now, I have over 29 years in the military and lots of time as a commander at every level from platoon to Area Support Group. This is my second Area Support Group and second deployment into a hostile fire zone.

I am very experienced in managing Family Readiness, having deployed over 1200 Soldiers to Iraq and Afghanistan and ensuring there were functional and highly effective Family Readiness Groups in all of my units. Now, you may ask, why am I telling you all of this?

The Why is actually you. You are a vital part of the success of the mission here in Kosovo. Your active involvement in your Family Readiness Group is a force multiplier. If your Soldier is secure in the knowledge that things are taken care of back home, that the Family Readiness Group has his or her back and the Rear Detachment and volunteer organizations are decisively engaged in resolving issues before they get to the crisis level, then your Soldier will be able to focus on the mission and his or her safety.

This doesn't mean that emergencies won't happen, but it does mean that the infrastructure is in place to handle the emergency and take care of the family.

Being a volunteer to help visit, make phone calls, baby-sit, be a Family Readiness Group Officer, organize activities, a wide variety of things will not only make the time of this deployment go faster, it will also make you more a part of your soldier's life. The Rumor Monster is alive and well and can never be killed, but you can help mitigate its effect.

Using the telephone tree, working with the Rear Detachment to get the straight story from the Task Force Chain of Command will help quell the effects of the Rumor Monster. Just because something is reported in the news or someone received an e-mail that said this or that, does not make it so. Working with the Family Readiness Group and the Chain of Command will ensure you get the straight story and the help you need.

I know. My spouse, who is not only serving as a



**Col. Terry Fobbs,
Area Support Group Falcon
Commander**

Senior Volunteer for Family Readiness in my old command and the higher headquarters, is also a volunteer for Area Support Group Falcon and serving as a CONUS Point of Contact.

Both of us have personally handled hundreds of issues involving the families of deployed soldiers. Good communication is the key. Don't suffer in silence; let someone know. We will help you get it fixed, whether it's pay, the furnace is out, Tri-Care, whatever. You will get help or you can be the person to also assist.

In summary, your loved ones are doing tremendous work here in Kosovo and are making a difference. On the home front, you can make a difference, volunteer, communicate, go the Family Readiness Group meetings, get to know each other and be another extended family for yourselves and your soldier. God Bless you all and God Bless our great nation.

Help for married Soldiers and spouses

By Spc. Tim Grooms

Deployments, and the separation that comes with them, can positively or negatively impact marriages. The chaplains of Camp Bondsteel are offering a Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program for Soldiers to strengthen marriage relationships.

Adopted by the Army, PREP is based on more than 20 years of research into what factors help marriages and signs that indicate marital trouble, said Lt. Col. Timothy Peterson, staff chaplain with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 34th Infantry Division.

For most deployed Soldiers the luxury of having their spouse around to attend the course is not possible, but, there is a way to have the two work together despite being far apart.

"PREP usually works when couples come in together and go through the course and learn how to strengthen the marriage," said Peterson. To overcome the fact that the couple is separated by an ocean, Peterson said, spouses of deployed Soldiers are encouraged to purchase the workbook and follow in the reading so the two can discuss the lessons through email or over the phone.

Although the class is designed to help with healthy marriages and marriages with minor difficulty, single Soldiers are also encouraged to attend the 12 week class so they can add a positive tool to use in the future, said Maj. Erik Feig, duty chaplain with the unit. "[This is] putting a tool in your tool box."

Although the course is helpful

for many, it can not help everyone.

"This course is not for people having serious problems or spousal abuse," said Peterson. "They should seek counseling."

Besides the regular PREP course, an alternate, Christian version is offered at the South Town Chapel.

"CPREP, associates with the bible because the bible provides motivating power for doing it," Peterson said.

Soldiers are using the course to improve relations with their loved ones.

"I hope what [the course] is going to do for me is make our relationship stronger," said Pfc. Travis Edwards, a supply specialists with HHC, 2-135th Infantry. "If we can prevent problems, it will be a much fuller relationship."

The course is also being used to help with workmates and friends.

"This will give a better understanding of how to relate to my hus-



Staff Sgt. Cordelia Sligh, a food inspector with Task Force Medical Falcon (Veterinary Services), participates in a CPREP class.

band and others in general," said Staff Sgt. Cordelia Sligh, a food inspector with Task Force Medical Falcon. "I can use it more with friendships and companionships."

Either married or single, the chaplains are offering a course to aid the Soldier in improving an already strong marriage or a marriage with minor problems. The classes are held Mondays at 7:30 p.m.

MNB(E) Soldiers save a life

By Spc. Tim Grooms

March 18 turned out to be a memorable day for three Soldiers of the 2-135th Infantry. What started with them holding back rioters in Vitina/ Viti ended with them saving a man's life from a violent beating at his house on the outskirts of town.

"Thanks to [the Soldiers] I have my life back," said Predrag Kulic, the ethnic-Serb the Soldiers saved from a beating that could have possibly killed him.

During mid-afternoon, the Soldiers noticed a group of about 200 rioters heading to the north end of town toward the local hospital. What the troops didn't know was that five Serb homes were located at that end of town and were targeted by the rioters, said Lt. Col. Paul Zimmerman, commander of 2-135th Infantry. The crowd attacked the first home it reached, which was Kulic's. The rioters pulled him out and began beating him, said Zimmerman.

"We heard glass in the house start breaking and noticed they pulled Kulic out of the house," said Sgt. Garth Carlson, a driver with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-135th Infantry.

When the Soldiers saw the attackers surround the helpless man and begin battering him, they forced their way through the group by shouting and pushing rioters away with their rifles until they reached Kulic. Once they reached him, the beating stopped and Kulic was pulled out, said Zimmerman.

Once to Kulic, the Soldiers thought he could be past saving.

"When we got to him we



Sgt. Douglas Weigel, left, a mechanic for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-135th Infantry, and Sgt. Garth Carlson, right, a driver with the unit, pose for a picture with Predrag Kulic, who they helped save from rioters March 18 in Viti/ Vitina.

thought he was dead," said Carlson. "He was covered in solid blood."

After getting to the wounded Kulic and halting the battering that was happening to him, helpful local citizens took him to the hospital.

"I was in such a mess I could not see anyone. So I didn't know who took me to the hospital," said Kulic.

After seeing the violence that was inflicted upon Kulic, Sgt. Douglas Weigel, a mechanic with HHC, was disturbed by what he witnessed.

"[I was] extremely upset it happened and that people could do that to someone because of their ethnic background," said Weigel, who also helped saved Kulic. "I have never seen people do that and I was extremely upset."

Once they saved Kulic and an

elderly woman who had been inside the house and who was untouched, said Zimmerman, Weigel and Carlson had the crowd turned around and headed back into the city. The rioters made one last push to cross the bridge near the Vitina/ Viti Church that evening at 5 p.m. They were held back and eventually dispersed.

The events of March 17 and 18 were largely regarded as a setback to the progress of Kosovo. During that time some were not as fortunate as Kulic and they lost their lives. The American Soldiers that saved Kulic's life made it possible for him to enjoy his life with his wife and two young children.

"They saved my life and I am very grateful," said Kulic. "Not just me, but in the name of my wife and kids."



Bullhorn From the Families

Be a part of the Bullhorn

Submit your helpful information, messages to the troops or tips on dealing with deployment to your Family Readiness Group leader or email them to FSGKosovo@bondsteel2.aur.army.mil.

Find helpful answers to your questions

Submitted by LeAnn Fobbs, Michigan

Army One Source (soon to be know as Military One Source) - This is an all inclusive place that you can use to ask **any** question (military or non-military related) either by phone or through the Web, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Phones and e-mails are answered by live qualified staff (with the capability for translation into 140 languages). They can assist with military questions and anything else (literally). They have MANY educational materials available and even offer limited, no charge, counseling services in your own community. Contact information is as follows: 1-800-464-8107 (from Germany, Italy or Netherlands 00-800-4648-1077); TTY/TDD - 1-800-346-9188, En espaZol 1-888-375-5971. Access through the Web: www.armyonesource.com (initial user ID is army and Password is onesouce).

TRICARE has Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinator (BCAC) staff to assist with your questions and problems. BCAC is a Congressionally mandated initiative, implemented by the TRICARE Management Activity to improve customer service, satisfaction, enhance beneficiary education, and help reduce the volume of Congressional inquiries from beneficiaries.

The FY2000 National Defense Authorization Act mandated the establishment of Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinator positions, full time at Lead Agent offices and collaterally at Military Treatment Facilities world-wide.

BCACs act as a preventive mechanism for trouble-shooting TRICARE and Military Health System issues and concerns. You may find your closest BCAC by visiting the Web site at:

<http://www.tricare.osd.mil/beneficiary/beneficiary/BCACdir/BCACview.aspx>



Bullhorn Important Information

Contacting the Red Cross

Members of the National Guard and Reserves, retirees and civilians may access Red Cross services through their local Red Cross chapter. Red Cross chapters are listed in local telephone books and on the American Red Cross Web site at:

<http://www.redcross.org/where/where.html>.

When calling the Red Cross to send an emergency message to a family member, please have ready the

following information which will speed the process of sending your message:

- Service Member's Full Name
- Rank
- Branch of Service
- Social Security Number
- Military Address
- Information about the deployed unit



Visit Our Website

www.mnbe.hqusaaur.army.mil

for more pictures, stories, and information about the Soldiers.